

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the application, and stand rejected. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Office Action contends that the language "through the motor generator" in claim 1, line 23, is not clear. Accordingly, this language has been amended above to state "with the motor generator" to clarify that the motor generator rotates the drive shaft. In other words, the sentence part "with the motor generator" adds further detail to the sentence part "rotation of the drive shaft of the engine in the stopped state".

In the 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph rejection, the Office Action further contends that the language "in which" in claim 10, lines 4-5 is unclear. Accordingly, "in which" has been amended above to "when" to clarify that the vibration suppressing means temporarily rotates the drive shaft of the engine, when the throttle valve is fully closed, at the recited speed. This is described, for example, in the present specification in the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13.

In view of the above, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-20 are in compliance with section 112. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-26 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuzuki (US 6,018,198) in view of Yamada et al. (US 5,942,862) and further in view of Yamada et al. (US 5,909,094).

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness under Section 103, all claim limitations of a claimed invention must be taught or suggested by the prior art. See MPEP, Section 2143.03 and In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). In view of the foregoing authority, the Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not support the asserted rejection.

Independent claims 1, 21, 23 and 25 as amended above recite, among other things, a motor generator selectively connected to an engine separately from a drive shaft. That is, the motor generator is not directly connected to the drive shaft but indirectly connected to the drive shaft. More precisely, in illustrative embodiments, the

motor generator is connected to the top of the drive shaft through pulleys, a belt and electromagnetic clutch. This configuration has the advantage that an auxiliary device can be driven by the motor generator while the engine is stopped and embodiments of the present invention may be easily applied to a normal engine system with a minimum design change.

Accordingly, the cited references do not render the claimed invention obvious for at least the reason that they do not teach or suggest the above feature. The primary reference, Tsuzuki et al., for instance, does not teach or suggest a motor generator selectively connected to an engine separately from a drive shaft, as required by the independent claims of the present application. Instead, in Tsuzuki et al., from what is disclosed concerning a connection between a motor generator 21 and an engine 1, the motor generator 21 appears to be connected directly in-line with a drive shaft of the engine 1 via a clutch 3. See, e.g., FIG. 1 and col. 10, lines 31-33 and col. 12, lines 29-30.

Moreover, the secondary references, Yamada et al. (US 5,942,862) (hereinafter, Yamada '862) and Yamada et al. (US 5,909,094) (hereinafter, Yamada '094) do not remedy the deficiencies in Tsuzuki et al. Yamada '862 and Yamada '094 are cited as teaching, respectively, "connecting the auxiliary devices to either the engine or the motor," and vibration suppressing means. The Office Action does not identify by reference number what elements of Yamada '862 and Yamada '094 are alleged to correspond to elements of the claimed invention. However, a review of these two references does not reveal any disclosure of a motor generator selectively connected to an engine separately from a drive shaft, as required by the independent claims of the present application.

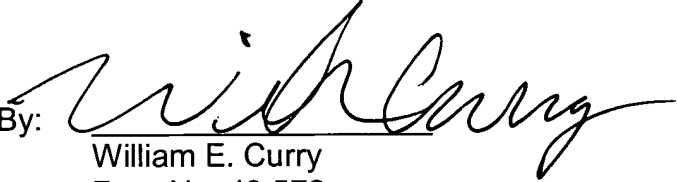
Accordingly, the cited references cannot render the present invention as recited in the independent claims obvious. Moreover, because the dependent claims incorporate the features of the independent claims, the dependent claims are likewise allowable, for at least the reasons discussed in connection with the independent claims. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-26 as unpatentable over Tsuzuki et al. in view of Yamada '862 and Yamada '094 is therefore respectfully requested.

In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4323 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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